

Washington, DC – This evening the Energy and Commerce Committee passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, taking the first key steps to bringing landmark comprehensive clean energy legislation to the floor of the House. Congressman Charles A. Gonzalez (TX-20) issued the following statement:

“Following weeks of negotiations the House Energy and Commerce Committee has reached consensus on job creating legislation to make clean energy a foundation for our economic recovery. The climate change challenges facing our country and our planet are serious and require immediate action. Today we voted to move our country to cleaner energy sources and towards energy independence from foreign sources of oil.

“We have taken the key steps to bringing landmark comprehensive clean energy legislation to the floor of the House, while aiming to contain costs for consumers and help industries transition to clean energy. In drafting this legislation we incorporated ideas from consumers and industries in all regions of the country, ensuring a more accurate representation of our available resources and energy needs. While initially concerned about the bill's lack of incentives towards utilities companies, negotiations resulted in language being added to the bill that would provide electric utilities sufficient allocations to cover emissions and keep cost low towards ratepayers, without compromising the legislation's primary goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“My first duty is to advance the economic well-being of my district. Our municipally-owned utility must be provided the flexibility it requires to meet the energy needs of our city and provide energy at low cost to consumers. As this bill goes to the full House, and eventually to the Senate, the debate will continue and some changes may be made. Throughout the entire legislative process, I will continue to be guided by one enduring principle: no one else represents the 20th Congressional District and every vote I cast is always guided by what best serves the interest of our community.”

The current agreement provides for a combined 20% renewable energy and energy efficiency standard by 2020. By that date, utilities would be required to obtain 15% of their electricity from renewable energy sources and demonstrate annual electricity savings of 5% from energy efficiency measures. In addition, the legislation seeks to reduce CO2 emissions by 17% by 2020, based on 2005 emissions levels.

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